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BOOK REVIEWS

AN INTERNATIONAL PRIMER-CYCLOPEDIA

Introduction to Natural Science, by ALEX. HILL, Downing College, Cambridge;
A History of the English Church, by the Very Rev. H. D. M. SPENCE,
Dean of Gloucester; *A History of Politics*, by EDWARD JENKS, M.A.;
Ethnology, Translated from the German of Dr. Michael Haherlandt, by
J. H. LOEWE; *Roman History*, Translated from the German of Dr. Louis
Koch, by LIONEL D. BARNETT, M.A.; *The Civilization of India*, by
ROMESH C. DUTT, C.I.E.; *Dante*, by EDMUND G. GARDNER, M.A.;
History of Language, by HENRY SWEET, M.A. Each volume is 6×4
inches in size, has 60 pages, and costs 40 cents. The Macmillan Com-
pany, New York.

A VERY serious problem in connection with secondary-school work is the selection of suitable books for a reference library. We usually begin with a dictionary and a cyclopedia and think that these form a very respectable nucleus. But an examination of school libraries and actual teaching experience with a class in literature, for example, will show one how little the cyclopedia is used and with what difficulty the teacher persuades the children to read carefully what is said on the subject in the cyclopedia. The children will give good reasons for not consulting it. They say that but one student can get at it at a time, that it is bulky and difficult to handle conveniently, and that the information is too often not interesting. Then, again, there are so many other articles or pictures to attract the attention. Some such reasons must have come to the publishers of this series to move them to the publication of these very attractive books (within and without). They treat of such subjects as come well within the scope of secondary education, they are written by men of ripe scholarship and of recognized position in their several fields of labor, they are attractively printed and bound, and are published at a price that makes possible not only the possession by the school of duplicate copies in the library, but, better still, the ownership of a number of them by individual members of the class. It is not alone information that we wish the child to find, otherwise a cyclopedia would avail, but it seems to me that if he can obtain the information by reading a work composed in an attractive style we are nearer the accomplishment of what we mean by educating a child.

The publishers have issued a circular describing the whole series and announcing a large number of volumes in press and in preparation.

A History of English Literature. By F. V. N. PAINTER. Sibley & Ducker,
1899. 8vo, pp. 697.

IN his *History of English Literature* Professor Painter insists that in the reaction from mere catalogues of authors and their works we have neglected the study of

English literature in its entirety, we have given ourselves up to the study of individual authors and even of single productions, and often forget to study their relations to each other or to their times. A little experience as a student with the catalogue method, and as a teacher with the work of individual authors, has led the writer of this notice to agree fully with Mr. Painter. Those of us who teach mainly by the study of individual authors do not always realize that our freshmen, and even our seniors, are almost entirely ignorant of the general course of our literature, and even of some of its great names. If you ask a class for the names of twelve or fifteen of our greatest writers and their approximate dates, you will be surprised at the ignorance displayed.

Not all of the remedies for this trouble are worth while. For instance, a brief sketchy introduction to English literature, or even to its fiction, on which the class spends only a week or two, is practically a waste of time. The facts must have a chance to soak in, for familiarity comes only with time.

Mr. Painter's book has two or three distinctly good qualities. He has picked out thirty odd writers about whom he talks in detail. The rest he subordinates to a few lines, which give little more than dates and titles. He thus keeps a very fair prospective, and helps students to discriminate between merely interesting writers and important ones.

The book is not meant to be taken by itself, but is to guide and supplement the reading of particular texts, so it contains no selections at all. Its use will save time in class, for the teacher may assign lessons in it instead of trying to supply the information verbally.

Perhaps the most attractive feature of the book, and a very important one, is the series of carefully chosen and splendidly printed portraits. Those of Swift, Johnson, Cowper, and Macaulay are especially illuminating, and those of the Victorian writers are mostly taken from now famous paintings.

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SOME RECENT FRENCH BOOKS

Contes Bleus. Par ÉDOUARD LABOULAGE. Edited by C. Fontaine, High School, Washington, D. C. Pp. 148. Price 40 cents. Boston: D. C. Heath & Co.

Contes et Saynètes. Edited by T. F. Colin, Miss Baldwin's Preparatory School, Bryn Mawr, Pa. Pp. 160. Price 65 cents. Boston: Ginn & Company.

Les Fautes de Langage, ou le Français comme on le parle. Par VICTOR F. BERNARD. W. R. Jenkins, New York.

Contes Bleus is a charming little book of fairy tales suited to beginners. The stories are simple in language and very attractive in material. It is an admirable book for first French readings.

Contes et Saynètes is a welcome addition to our stock of readers. This book contains selections from modern authors and prepares the student for a further and